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FREE TAKE ONE

Hoax caller who boasted 'I won't get arrested' is jailed

By Owen Hughes

A BOGUS caller who gloated about avoiding arrest after making a spate of 17 hoax emergency calls in less than three hours has been jailed for 12 weeks and served with a restraining order.

Michael Eames, 23, made a total of 21 calls to Hampshire Fire and Rescue between December 24 and January 4 to falsely report people trapped in fires in Basingstoke and his hometown of Winchester.

In audio released by the emergency services, Eames can be heard reporting that his aunt was trapped in a bungalow blaze, but the call handler easily tripped up the time waster over minor details.

After it was explained to Eames about the potential life-threatening consequences of his actions, he said: "So, if I carry on doing it, I will get arrested?

"It won't happen. I won't get arrested, I promise you."

Eames was sentenced to 12 weeks in prison on January 23 and is now subject to a two-year restraining order.

Control station manager Allison Burrows said: "The custodial sentence reflects the seriousness of the crime.

"Hoax calls waste our time, cost the public money and, more worryingly, really do put lives at risk.

"I am extremely proud of the team for the rigorous yet professional way they exposed the caller with a series of challenging questions until he hung up."

Control station manager Alison Burrows

Control room staff sent out a total of four fire crews, costing £300 each, due to Eames' persistent nuisance calls.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority chairman councillor Chris Carter said: "Hoax calls cost lives – it's that simple.

"People calling in with false reports need to consider how they would feel if someone delayed firefighters getting to them or their loved ones.

"If that is not enough motivation to stop offenders maybe the prospect of going to prison and having their phone cut off will be."

Recent figures show a 60 per cent increase in false reports to the fire service in the past four years, with 295 hoaxes in 2017.

One amorous resident called to track down a firefighter she met on a night out, while another dialled 999 because of a broken fish tank.

Pictures: Kevin Poolman

Mayor Paul Frankum welcomed husbands and wives including Mr and Mrs Hayward, inset, celebrating their golden and diamond anniversaries to a special reception

Diamond day for couples

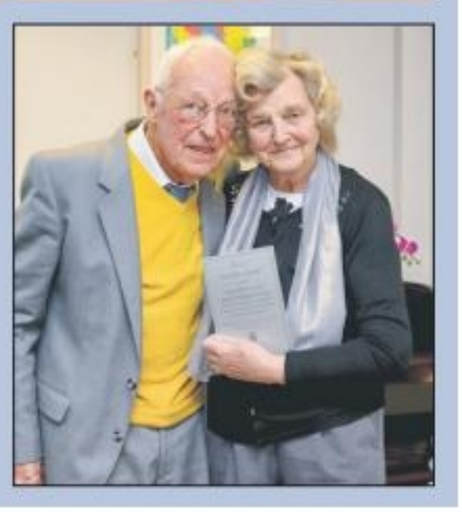
Couples in Basingstoke who tied the knot more than half a century ago celebrated at a special afternoon tea reception.

The annual event involves couples married as long ago as 1957 marking the special date with a spot of afternoon tea, cakes and a raffle.

Mayor Paul Frankum shared the special experience last month with the couples celebrating their golden and diamond wedding anniversaries.

Cllr Frankum said it was a "privilege" to celebrate the extraordinary milestone with couples from the borough.

Turn to page three for more



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Accounts
Ext: 6911
accounts@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Advertising
Telephone: 01256 952180
enquiries@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Basingstoke Observer:
Steve Lucy,
Head of Advertising Hampshire
steve@basingstokeobserver.co.uk
Ext: 6939

Distribution & Subscriptions
Ext: 6902
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Newsdesk
Group Editor:
Karen Neville
01235 516931
karen@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Reporter:
Owen Hughes
Ext: 6930
owen@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Ents:
Josh Cox
josh@taylornewspapers.co.uk

Production
Ext: 6934
studio@taylornewspapers.co.uk

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Delay to new 999 system

By Owen Hughes

A NEW computer system that could revolutionise the way police forces in the region deal with emergency calls is behind schedule and £3million over budget.

Originally scheduled to be rolled out by Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary in March, delays have set the now £30.6m project back until late spring.

The modernised system will replace "outdated systems" and improve the way both forces handle 999 and 101 calls.

Through the software, operators will gain instant access to information on screen about a caller, including details about recent crimes in the area.

In November, the decision was taken to extend the testing period pushing back the original launch date to late spring, with Hampshire contributing £1.356m to the costs.

Chief Superintendent Christian Bunt said the "cutting edge system" developed in conjunction with Microsoft will "help both forces work more closely together".

He added: "As it is such a crucial system, we always knew it would need to undergo rigorous testing before the planned implementation date.

"This involved integrating it with numerous other operation systems.

"We cannot afford to take risks with something that is so fundamental to us delivering a service to the public, so when testing revealed that extra work needed to be done, our operation view was that the testing phase should be extended."

A spokesperson for Michael Lane, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, said: "The Commissioner has challenged the Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary about the additional spending, which he is reassured is necessary for keeping the public safer and for a successful launch."

The forces will be the first in the UK to use the new system, which has the potential for crimes to be reported online.

Join Sir David and do your bit for butterflies

SIR David Attenborough is urging people across Hampshire to spend Saturday taking action for butterflies to mark the 50th anniversary of wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation.

The UK-wide conservation day will feature people carrying out practical work to improve and create habitats for their local butterfly and moth species.

More than three-quarters of the UK's butterflies and two-thirds of our larger moths have declined in the last 40 years.

BC President Sir David Attenborough said: "Half a century ago a small group of naturalists became so concerned about the plight of the UK's butterflies that they decided to join forces to protect them.

"That organisation became Butterfly Conservation and 50 years later the need for people who care about our butterflies and moths is greater than ever before.

"You can do your bit for butterflies by taking part in Butterfly Conservation's day of action. By working together we can all take some simple steps to provide butterflies with a future."

People are invited to join BC's Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch from 10am until 4pm at their Magdalen Hill Down butterfly reserve near Winchester.

More than 10,000 species of butterfly are seen at Magdalen Hill Down every year.

Sir David Attenborough picture by Helen Atkinson

Developer will create a 'great place to live'

A MASTER developer has been chosen to deliver up to 3,500 homes in an ambitious new Manydown development.

Urban&Civic, partnered with the Wellcome Trust, was announced as the private sector development partner with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council on Wednesday last week.

The decision ends a comprehensive 18-month procurement process by the two councils to deliver the new development in the northern part of Manydown in Basingstoke.

Proposals for the development include 3,500 homes, businesses, shops and community facilities, two primary schools and land for a secondary school and a 250 acre country park.

Urban&Civic chief executive Nigel Hugill said: "Our selection against really tough competition demonstrates the increasing scalability of the master developer approach in meeting housing numbers.

"There is much to be done but people should soon come to see the differences."

Cabinet member for Manydown councillor John Izett said: "I am delighted to welcome Urban&Civic as our selected partner.

"I am confident they will contribute hugely to meeting the challenges ahead to create Manydown as a great place to live."

Outline planning application was submitted in March last year and is now under consideration.

Gender pay gap reveals council to be 'fair and inclusive employer'

WOMEN are paid slightly more than men at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council according to a recent internal report.

The gender pay gap slightly favours women who earn 35p per hour more than their male counterparts, showing a gender pay gap of -2.16 per cent, bucking the national trend.

Slightly more than half the number of council staff are male.

Figures show that on average in the UK, men are paid more than women with a gap of almost 20 per cent.

Salaries are even further weighted in favour of men across the borough where the gender pay gap is higher than 25 per cent.

Chief executive of the council Mel Barrett said: "Reporting on the gender pay gap is a valuable tool for assessing levels of equality in the workplace. The council is in a good position.

"The analysis demonstrates that the council performs much better than many organisations and this reflects the council's aspiration to be a fair and inclusive employer, making best use of its talent regardless of gender."

New government regulations require every organisation employing 250 or more people to publish average pay between male and female employees.

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Thousands of jobs at risk as retailers close

By Owen Hughes

THOUSANDS of jobs are under threat as two more well-known names on the high street bite the dust.

Toys R Us, which has a store on Brighton Hill Retail Park in Basingstoke, and electronics specialists Maplin, which has an outlet on Winchester Road, collapsed into administration last week.

More than 3,000 jobs are at risk at the national toyshop chain as insolvency specialists at Moorfields begin the winding down process.

Simon Thomas, joint administrator and partner at Moorfields, said: "We're encouraging customers to redeem their gift cards and vouchers as soon as possible.

"'We will make every effort to secure a buyer for all or part of the business.

"The newer, smaller, more interactive stores in the portfolio have been outperforming the older warehouse-style stores that were opened in the 1980's and 1990's.

'"Whilst this process is likely to affect many Toys R Us staff, whether some or all of the stores will close remains to be decided.

"We are grateful for the commitment and hard work of employees as the business continues to trade."

The US parent company for the retailer filed for bankruptcy protection in September with a rescue plan agreed three months later.

At least 26 of its 105 stores in the UK, including Basingstoke, were already planned to close this spring after a lean Christmas period for the retailer.

More than 2,300 members of staff across Maplin's 217 stores are also at risk after rescue talks failed on Wednesday last week.

Zelf Hussain, joint administrator and PwC partner, said: "The challenging conditions in the UK retail sector are well documented.

"Like many other retailers, Maplin has been hit hard by a slowdown in consumer spending and more expensive imports as the pound has weakened. We will continue to trade the business as normal whilst a buyer is sought.

"Staff have been paid their February wages and will continue to be paid for future work while the company is in administration."

Carpetright, also based at Bright Hill, entered talks with lenders after its second profit warning in less than two months.

Mayor Paul Frankum and Mayoress Jane Frankum enjoy tea with some of the couples including inset, Mr and Mrs Spicer who were celebrating

Sharing golden memories

LUCKY-IN-LOVE couples from around the borough celebrated a very special anniversary last week.

The happily married husbands and wives commemorated their golden and diamond anniversaries at a special reception held at Basingstoke College of Technology.

Two parties were hosted on Monday February 26 and Tuesday 27.

The Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane, councillor Paul Frankum, hosted the popular event to help make their anniversary celebrations even more memorable.

Cllr Frankum said: "Golden and diamond anniversaries are very special milestones and it is an honour and a privilege to be able to join in the celebrations with so many couples from around the borough."

Couples celebrating a golden anniversary could have been married as long ago as 1967, while diamond couples would have been wedded even longer ago, in 1957.

InBrief

Crashes on A34

TWO crashes on the A34 within the space of an hour on Thursday morning left one man dead and two others with serious life-changing injuries.

Police closed the A34 just south of Tot Hill Services at around 7.18am after a 46-year-old van driver from Southampton was killed and his front seat passenger left with life-changing injuries after a collision with a lorry.

A short time later, at 7.52am, police were called to a second collision on the A34 northbound at Highclere involving two lorries and a car.

The male driver of one lorry was taken to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, also with serious life-changing injuries.

Inspector Barry Long said: "We would like to thank everyone for their patience while we dealt with this incident, in what were particularly difficult conditions, with temperatures as low as minus 7C.

"Our thoughts are with the loved ones of the deceased at this time."

By-election result

THE winner of last week's Kempshott by-election was Conservative Tony Pullar, known as Tony Capon.

More than 20 per cent of the electorate turned out despite the adverse weather conditions on Thursday.

Cllr Capon polled 686 votes, Labour's Grant Donohue received 366 and the Liberal Democrat candidate Stavroulla O'Doherty came third with 113 votes.

The by-election came about after the death of Councillor Rita Burgess, aged 74, in December.

Serco clean up as rubbish deal announced

SPRING is still a fortnight away but the cleaning has already begun in Hampshire as the council announce a rubbish deal worth £44million.

Services company Serco based at Bartley Wood Business Park in Hook, have been awarded the joint waste contract following a retendering process.

The current deal with Veolia expires in October, having provided the rubbish collections for Hart District Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council since 2011.

Serco's £5.5m per year deal ensures the company will provide household waste and recycling collections for the next eight years, with an option of extending for a further eight years.

Basingstoke and Deane councillor Hayley Eachus said: "Our primary objective is to ensure our residents receive good value for money. Working jointly in partnership with Hart District Council has allowed us to achieve significant improvements to the service provided, while securing the most efficient, value for money service for our residents."

Robin Davies from Serco said the company "are very proud to have been selected" and looking forward to working with the councils.

The councils thanked Veolia for their service over the past seven years and have offered staff currently employed by Veolia the opportunity to transfer to Serco when the new contract begins this autumn.

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Ferrari driver guilty of teenager's death

Neither were wearing seatbelts at the time

By Owen Hughes

A DRIVER who killed his 13-year-old passenger when he flipped his £1.2million sports car on a farm road in North Warnborough has been convicted of causing death by careless driving.

Matthew Cobden, 39, of Long Lodge Drive, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, appeared at Winchester Crown Court on Thursday in connection with the supercar crash which killed teenager Alexander Worth.

Cobden, who owns a luxury car storage facility near Hook, was unloading his Ferrari F50 from a trailer in August 2016 when Alexander asked for a picture with the car.

The court heard how Cobden offered to take Alexander for a spin in the car, before losing control of the vehicle and hitting a fence panel.

Neither Alexander nor Cobden were wearing seatbelts and were flung from the Ferrari in the crash.

Anton Allera, from the Crown Prosecution Service, said: "Alexander Worth's death was the tragic result of driver error on the part of Matthew Cobden.

"Following a thorough police investigation the CPS presented evidence to demonstrate the vehicle was in perfect working order prior to the incident.

"This included evidence from a forensic vehicle examiner and a Ferrari expert who confirmed that there were no pre-collision defects.

"Our thoughts are with Alexander's family and friends at this time."

Cobden is due to be sentenced at Winchester Crown Court on Monday, March 26.

Adam with site manager Alistair at Gillies Meadow and inset, with grandad Andrew and mum Emma

Meet Adam, youngest builder on the block

A BUDDING young builder has traded his mittens and Wellingtons for a hardhat and fluorescent jacket at just three years old.

Adam Blackwell might be more accustomed to Bob the Builder than he is to David Wilson Homes, but that didn't stop the eager youngster from being given a very special apprenticeship with the firm.

Adam will 'oversee' the construction of plot 215 at the Gillies Meadow development.

The young apprentice from Basingstoke will see the plot at foundation level, when the roof goes on and then again once it has been completed.

Sales advisers first met Adam when he made mum Emma stop outside the construction site every day without fail so that he could watch the vehicles in action.

Emma said Adam is "thrilled" to be a part of the build and wears his new hard hat almost every day.

She said: "His relationship with the site to date has really stimulated his imagination and we are all excited to see how this new adventure will inspire him."

Adam hopes to drive dumper trucks and diggers as a career when he is older, she added.

Managing director Paul Crispin said he was "delighted" that Adam was enjoying his new role with the company.

Crash victim 'loved by all who knew him'

THE family of a Basingstoke driver killed on the A303 in Andover last week have described him as a man who "brought joy to many".

Stuart Woodhouse, 44, of Garrett Court, Oakley, died after crashing in his Ford Mondeo on the A303 on February 27.

Mr Woodhouse's family said: "Stuart was a loving father, son, brother, uncle and friend, who was loved by all who knew him.

"He was a man who lived life to the full, brought joy to many and he will be sadly missed."

Police were called to the single vehicle collision on the A303 eastbound, just north of the railway line, at around 7.30am.

Officers from Hampshire Constabulary are appealing for witnesses as investigations into the exact circumstances of the collision continue.

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101 quoting reference 44180076858.

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Have your say on new boundaries

By Owen Hughes

BASINGSTOKE and Deane's ward boundaries could be set for a major overhaul as the council re-opened its public consultation last month.

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England's consultation on new council ward boundaries across Basingstoke and Deane will run from now until May.

The boundary consultation is the first part of an electoral review for the borough.

Changes to the boundaries should provide 'electoral equality', meaning each councillor would represent close to the same number of electors.

Community identity and interests across the borough should also be reflected in the new council wards.

Professor Colin Mellors, chair of the commission, said: "We will consider every submission we receive from local people before we draw up draft recommendations."

The original consultation on new ward boundaries in November 2017 proposed the council should have 54 councillors, six fewer than currently.

In January, the Commission paused the review after admitting an "administrative error" meant the "totality of evidence supplied by councillors and council groups" had not been considered before making its verdict.

The consultation period re-opened on February 27 after confirming 54 councillors should be enough to represent the borough.

Residents have until May 7 to tell the Commission where the boundaries should be set.

A draft recommendation will then be published in August and open a further phase of public consultation ahead of the 2019 council elections.

Submit comments to the Boundary Commission at: http://bit.ly/2CstG4z

Basingstoke and Deane wards as they are

Picture: Ordnance Survey data (c) Crown copyright and database rights 2018

Geoff CLIC's with fundraising

A FATHER who lost his son to a rare form of cancer sang his way to Basingstoke on Sunday to raise funds for charity.

Geoff Davis has entertained customers and staff at Morrisons stores all across the south and had his sights firmly set on Basingstoke as the final destination for his tour.

Performances ran from 11am to 1pm, then 2pm to 4pm, and finally 5pm to 6.30pm, with funds raised in memory of Geoff and Judie's son.

Mikey died before reaching his third birthday from the still rare children's cancer Disseminated Neuroblastoma in 1975.

Geoff said: "The then, Sargent Care for Children charity, now CLIC Sargent, were a tremendous support to my wife Judie and I at that desperate and devastating time in our lives.

"I have produced a CD in memory of our son to support CLIC Sargent and when I found out about the Morrisons partnership, thought it would be a good opportunity to raise vitally needed funds by singing at a few stores, and now it has escalated."

Liz Blunt at CLIC Sargent said the charity is "very lucky to have supporters like Geoff".

For information about fundraising for children and young people with cancer, contact Liz Blunt on 07944 696 858 or Liz.Blunt@clicsargent.org.uk

Geoff Davis, Liz Blunt and CLIC Sargent volunteer Tom welcome their audience at Morrisons

InBrief

Cold weather cash

BASINGSTOKE MP Maria Miller has welcomed cold weather payments of up to £25 for vulnerable households in postcodes RG21, RG22, RG23, RG24, RG25 and RG27.

Residents receiving certain benefits will automatically get the payment after each period of weather below zero degrees centigrade for seven consecutive days.

Mrs Miller said the payments mean "people do not need to worry about turning up their heating when temperatures plummet".

Gardening talk

GREEN-FINGERED horticulturalists can get ready for spring at Chineham Library with a talk from Royal Horticultural Society judge Sally Burr on March 17.

Plants will be available to buy at the end of the presentation about container gardening, with proceeds going towards Marie Curie.

Tickets for the event at 2pm should be booked in advance online: http://bit.ly/2CQMczb

Chocolate hunt

NATIONAL Trust and Cadbury have teamed up to offer children in Basingstoke the chance to search for logs hidden in the gardens of The Vyne this Easter, March 30 to April 15.

Animal stamps collected from the logs can be traded for chocolate.

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Daniel Brownlie with youngsters from the Little Kickers scheme

Helping Little Kickers to sparkle in Malawi

By Owen Hughes

A Hook-based football coach travelled from Hart in Hampshire to the 'warm heart of Africa' to help children in the poorest country in the world.

Daniel Brownlie, joint manager of Hartley Wintney FC, and Jenn Phillbrook covered more than 7,600 miles on their journey to Malawai last month for Little Kickers, which runs pre-school football academies.

Little Kickers partnered with charity Sparkle Malawai to lead teachers on an intensive training course qualifying them to coach their 200+ students.

Daniel said: "It's genuinely one of the happiest places I've ever been.

"The security of those walls at Sparkle creates the perfect atmosphere for children to develop, create and have fun.

"Sadly, what goes on beyond those walls will melt the hardest of hearts.

"We're so happy that our classes are making a difference to the lives of children here, but there is so much more that needs to be done."

Jenn said she was "blown away" by the quality of teaching at Sparkle as the teachers also "believe that children learn best while having fun".

Insufficient energy supply, high illiteracy levels and HIV and AIDS pandemics are among the long list of problems Malawai faces, with one in 14 children dying before reaching the age of five.

Little Kickers has helped make a difference for the children on the courses in Malawi

Prove your writing talent to David

COMEDIAN and children's author David Walliams has been named the judge of a free writing competition for children aged four to 14, organised by Basingstoke based tuition provider Explore Learning.

The Britain's Got Talent judge will surprise the lucky winner during a school assembly and present them with a trophy, a trip to Disneyland Paris and £500 of books for their school.

Every child who enters the competition will receive a certificate to celebrate their story, along with personalised feedback from one of Explore Learning's tutors.

Mr Walliams said: "It is a real privilege to be named judge for this year's National Young Writers' Awards and I am so looking forward to reading what the brilliant brains of our country's children come up with.

Judge David Walliams

"To write is such a wonderful, creative outlet for people of all ages and competitions just like this one are a fantastic way of encouraging kids across the UK to take the leap and release their inner authors."

Stories should be themed around 'heroes' and submitted before the Sunday April 29 deadline.

Entry forms can be collected from Explore Learning in the Chineham Shopping Centre, or completed online at: http://bit.ly/2lycKxt

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Mission to help stranded folk in show-hit Cumbria

ROYAL Air Force Chinook helicopters made the 300 mile excursion from RAF Odiham to stranded Cumbrian residents in the early hours of Monday morning.

Joint Helicopter Command responded to a request from the local authorities in Cumbria to come to the aid of those in need in the wake of the recent heavy snowfall.

The support comes less than six months after assisting with the relief effort in the Caribbean.

Flt Lt Andrew Donovan said: "Our crews and engineers reacted fast and were into work at 4am to deploy a Chinook helicopter and all of the required support personnel to the region."

No. 27 Squadron's Survival Equipment specialists arrived early to ready the gear required by the aircrew.

Air Traffic Controllers were also called upon to assist with the safe departure of the 30metre long aircraft.

Chinooks can carry up to 55 troops and/or up to ten tonnes of freight.

Personnel and equipment from the Joint Helicopter Support Squadron and Tactical Supply Wing also hit the road overnight to assist with the relief efforts.

Chinook helicopters from RAF Odiham flew to rural communities to provide relief for people cut off. Picture: RAF Odiham

Pub boosts funds for RAF charity

By Owen Hughes

PUB managers have roared into action to raise more than £1,600 for charity.

Since opening in May 2017, the team at The Red Lion in Odiham have raised vital funds for various charities and have now partnered with nearby RAF Odiham.

The pub has chosen to support the RAF Benevolent Fund, the RAF's leading welfare charity, with a variety of fundraising initiatives.

One such fundraising idea will involve team members conquering 86 miles over three days as they complete a sponsored walk along Hadrian's Wall.

Sophie Cook, marketing manager for The Red Lion, said: "For those that know us well, you'll know we care passionately about the local community.

"We have many serving and former members of the RAF who are loyal customers at the pub, and we happily offer a discount to them.

"It was easy for us, in the 100th year of the Royal Air Force, to support the Benevolent Fund to help show our ongoing support to the RAF families, both locally and further afield."

In the last two years, the RAF Benevolent Fund has spent more than £460,000 supporting RAF personnel based at Odiham and their families, with a total of £17.6m spent in 2016 supporting 65,000 members nationally.

Paul Hewsom, regional director for the charity, said: "Local support means a lot to the Fund; without it we simply wouldn't be able to spread awareness of what we do for those in the RAF, past and present, to the public.

"Everyone at The Red Lion in Odiham has been so generous both with their time and efforts.

"We are really grateful to them for helping the RAF family, and look forward to working together in the year ahead."

Funds will be used to help personnel and families, such as free relationship counselling sessions with Relate, youth programmes and individual grants to serving men and women in need.

One of the initiatives thought up by Red Lion staff includes donating 20p from every pint of Red Mist Ale sold.

Julian Clarke from Red Mist Leisure said the charity is close to its heart and was excited to "contribute to the amazing work they do".

InBrief

Bid for funds

BASINGSTOKE MP Maria Miller has called on schools and youth groups to bid for a slice of a record amount of European funds available for a range of activities.

Costello School has used Erasmus+ funding in the past to work with schools and organisations in Sweden, Latvia and Czech Republic.

Mrs Miller said: "It would be great to see other Basingstoke schools getting similar experiences."

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1rGu1Pj

Good place to work

A BASINGSTOKE life insurance broker has placed eighth in the Sunday Times 100 best companies to work for after more than doubling in size.

Staff at Reassured, based in Basing View, responded to a range of factors, from happiness with salaries to the working environment. The organisation ranked 28 places higher than in 2017.

CEO Steve Marshall said it is a "great achievement" for the company who have "big plans" for the future.

Breakfast cash

HAMPSHIRE schools have been offered the chance to scoop up £1,000 in grant money by cereal giants Kellogg's to help provide breakfast to all children before they start school. Schools can apply for a grant online: http://bit.ly/2FxJWQn

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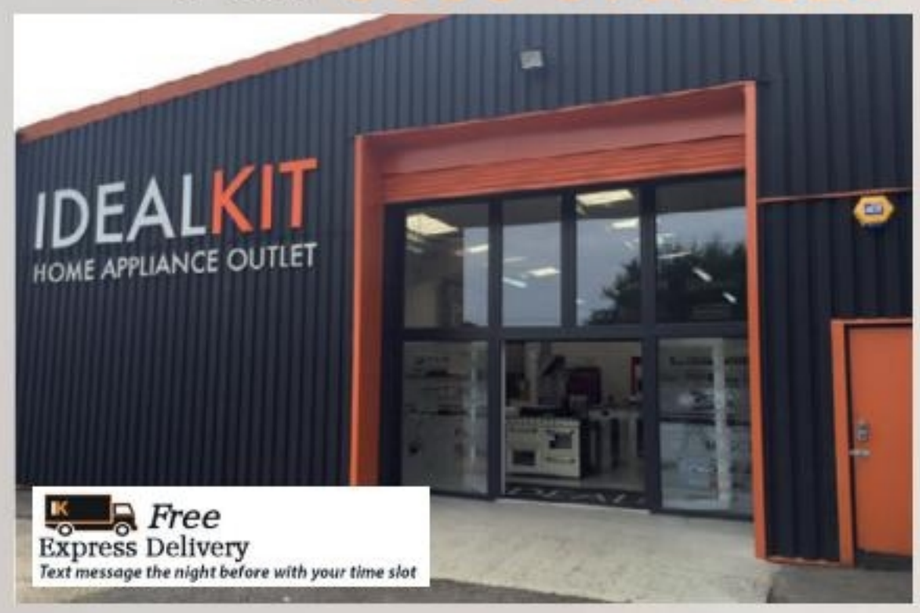

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PROPERTYWEEKLY

Romans to raise funds for International Women's Day

By Romans Group

To mark International Women's Day on 8th March, Romans' staff – both male and female, will be wearing purple to raise funds for the Africa Educational Trust, a charity which helps provide education to young girls in South Sudan who would usually be thought of as nothing more than a baby machine and not worthy of an education.

"Gender politics have become an emotive topic of late with the 100 year anniversary of women being able to vote and the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements sweeping the globe, International Women's Day has provided us with the perfect opportunity to get behind this cause and make a difference" explains Vanessa Foot, Romans' Culture and Community Engagement Manager.

Across the business 54% of our employees are female, working in a variety of roles ranging from our apprenticeship scheme all the way up to the executive board of directors of our parent company the Leaders Romans Group.

"In addition to offering equal opportunity for male and female staff, we also strive to improve their work-life balance. We place a great importance on ensuring our staff can fulfil family commitments and employ a number of modern working practices including flexible working hours, job shares and, in some roles, the opportunity to work from home" Vanessa explains.

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Entertainment & Leisure

Prepare for a very British invasion

By Josh Cox

THE chances of survival? A million to one...

The critically-acclaimed Pantaloons invade The Haymarket on Friday 23 March with a funny yet faithful new adaptation of H G Wells' science fiction masterpiece, The War of the Worlds.

Audiences should prepare to look on in abject terror as a multi-talented cast of four use musical instruments, puppetry and enthusiasm to recreate deadly heat-rays, giant fighting-machines, squidgy tentacled Martians and interplanetary warfare on an epic scale.

Prolific touring theatre company The Pantaloons have been getting a name for themselves with their uniquely charming and anarchic adaptations of literary works such as Pride and Prejudice, The Canterbury Tales, Gulliver's Travels and Bleak House.

This new production of The War of the Worlds continues their tradition of funny, frantic and fast-paced versions of classic English Literature.

Adapter and co-artistic director of the company, Mark Hayward, explains that The Pantaloons want the show to be moving as well as amusing.

He said: "This new adaptation is very faithful to the text, which essentially tells the story of one man's struggle to survive against impossible odds, driven by the hope of being reunited with his wife.

"The trick to not undermining the heart of a book, is to avoid sending up the text itself and instead focus on lampooning theatrical conventions.

"The joke should be about how hard it is to stage a full-blown alien invasion; then we can still tell a tale with pathos and all of H G Wells' insight.

"But the show will feature plenty of humour too, with nods to other classic works of science fiction, ingenious cost-saving 'special' effects, and plenty to say about terrestrial life in modern Britain.

"After all," says Hayward, "this is a book in which the initial response from Londoners to the alien invasion is that really the authorities should have done more to keep the trains running on time!"

Tickets are priced £18. Call 01256 844244 or visit anvilarts.org.uk to book tickets.

On stage

Singing sensation

Soloist Chris Baker will be performing at The Bolton Arms in Old Basing on Saturday from 9pm.

Taking the audience back to the 70s, 80s and 90s, Baker will be performing a range of covers from Michael Bolton to Dean Martin.

Feel the NRG

Lively and entertaining band NRG are due to play at The Raven in Hook on March 16.

The pair will perform a wide mix of acoustic sounds from the likes of Simon & Garfunkel, Cat Stevens and Bob Dylan and classic rock tunes by bands such as The Eagles, Dire Straits, Pink Floyd & Kings Of Leon.

The free gig is from 8.30pm to 11pm.

Joining forces

As part of The Eccentric Orbits Tour, popular folk bands Leveret and Spiro are coming together to play at The Haymarket tomorrow at 7.30pm.

This joint gig is an opportunity to hear the contrasting music of two of England's finest and most original instrumental ensembles, and will include a special joint finale.

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Evening of Beethoven masterpieces

By Josh Cox

ONE of Germany's most renowned orchestras, the Stuttgart SWR Symphony Orchestra comes to The Anvil to deliver a programme comprised of some of Beethoven's finest works.

The programme will begin with pieces from The Creatures of Prometheus; which was the only full length ballet Beethoven wrote. Its pieces are said to be easier and lighter than music purely dedicated for the concert hall.

Following on from that, Swiss pianist Francesco Piemontesi, who has been widely praised for his 'playful, assertive, intelligent music making, with bone-china clarity' (The Times), will perform Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto.

This is among the first of Beethoven's mature masterworks. The opening movement is full of tension and drama, followed by a slow movement graced with eloquent dialogue between the piano and woodwind instruments, and a vivacious finale.

Concluding the programme will be Eroica symphony, Beethoven's groundbreaking masterpiece. Its emotional heart is the famous funeral march, and the Symphony ends with a set of variations on a simple tune that overflows with musical imagination.

The show will be conducted by Sir Roger Norrington, who has been fêted for his historically informed performances of Beethoven. He has conducted more than 50 world premieres, and has appeared regularly with the Berlin Philharmonic and the Vienna Philharmonic among other major orchestras worldwide.

Tickets to see the Stuttgart SWR Symphony Orchestra are priced from £14 to £40; under 16s and full-time student tickets are discounted to £10, which includes a £2 booking fee.

The show begins at 7.45pm. For more information or to book, call the Anvil Arts box office on 01256 844244, or visit the website anvilarts.org.uk.

There will be a pre-concert talk taking place at The Forge at 6.30pm; interested audiences are advised to call to book this special opportunity.

On stage

Designated driver

The Cricketers in Baughurst will come alive with rock and pop songs by Whozdrivin as they deliver a free gig on March 17.

The band will open at 8.30pm and play songs from the 60s to the present day, also throwing in the odd Motown, funk and soul hit.

Hello Hello Hello

Covers band 2nd Echo are once again putting on a free gig at The Wheatsheaf in Alton.

This is set to take place on March 17 from 8.45pm till 11.30pm.

The band is comprised of five experienced musicians who play a very wide range of well-rehearsed covers depending on the profile of the audience.

La Traviata

Fiddler on the Roof, presented by Basingstoke Amateur Operatic Society is set to open at The Haymarket on Tuesday and run until March 17.

This much loved story, set in 1905 in the small, tradition-steeped Jewish village of Anatevka, Russia carries themes of love tangled with humour.

Tickets are around £23.

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'Too good at being Johnny Cash. He even stares like him' The Edge, Bournemouth

puzzle drome

Your weekly puzzle challenge

CROSS CODE

15	22	5	6	4	8	10	■	11	20	8	24	8
20	■	21	■	8	■	21	2	23	■	19	■	10
8	26	21	6	6	20	17	■	2	25	22	9	20
21	■	13	■	2	■	20	■	7	■	2	■	6
8	9	20	23	17	■	8	25	2	23	6	20	9
■	4	■	■	11	2	9	2	■	■	21	■	20
23	20	25	20	8	8	■	7	4	23	23	21	23
20	■	21	■	■	4	9	20	7	■	■	22	■
14	4	17	20	3	2	23	■	15	20	8	9	8
20	■	16	■	23	■	2	■	23	■	15	■	20
23	21	22	9	20	■	11	4	21	12	4	11	20
4	■	8	■	2	25	20	■	14	■	25	■	11
20	1	20	25	9	■	11	4	20	9	2	23	18

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4 I	5	6 L	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23 R	24	25	26

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

CHEAPEST SEAT HOME

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

Quiz Challenge

1. Which song was a UK No 1 hit for Blondie in 1980 and for Atomic Kitten in 2002?
2. Which classic Ealing comedy was remade by the Coen brothers in 2004?
3. Which ITV game show was hosted at different times by Nicky Campbell, Bradley Walsh and John Leslie?
4. Two English cathedrals are World Heritage sites. Name one of them.
5. Which type of cloth cap is named after the hero of a poem by Robert Burns?
6. Gemma Whelan plays Yara Greyjoy, the commander of the ship Black Wind, in which fantasy drama TV series?
7. With which car manufacturer would you associate the Picanto, Rio and Venga models?
8. What is a group of six musicians called?
9. In the Bible, who performed the Dance of the Seven Veils?
10. Nessun Dorma is an aria from which opera?

NONAGRAM

R	Y	E
A	T	I
N	I	R

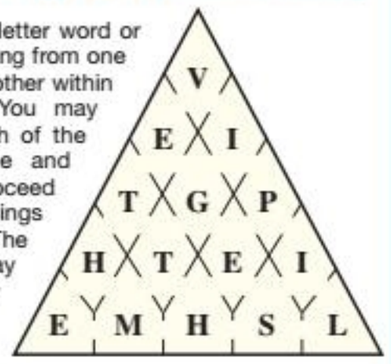
How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
26 Good; 31 Very Good; 36 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

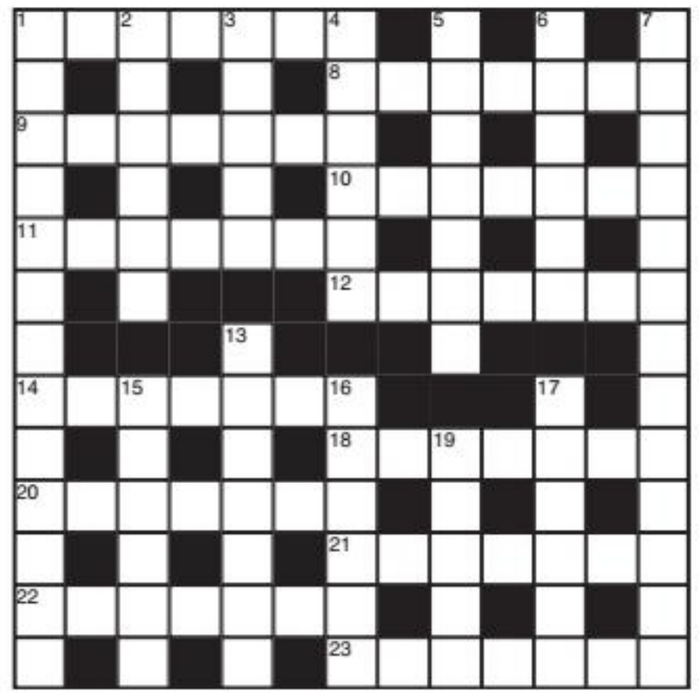


FIVE ALIVE

KW	IN	TI	FC	HE
RN	■	RD	■	SO
OI	DV	EI	OR	MS
NW	■	AB	■	EA
GS	UI	LE	SK	YS

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Grumbled when guide leader was provoked (7)
8. I'm arranging bribe for drinker (7)
9. Not missing motionless substitutes when agile (7)
10. Russell in small picture used acid (7)
11. Hastily arrange to warm up for game (5,2)
12. Finish with unusually sore back (7)
14. Issue a free sample (7)
18. Where one may work on the right for one in authority (7)
20. We called in and left during the argument (7)
21. Tom gets hold of hot water in French castle (7)
22. A coin is exchanged in the capital (7)
23. Begged to put penny on particular kind of petrol (7)

DOWN

1. The way a hurricane might move rapidly (2,4,3,4)
2. Publicly displayed when working at exhibition (2,4)
3. Shaggy mass of hair will startle (5)
4. Pass away quietly while taking exercise in French port (6)
5. Is plentiful when spring comes in (7)
6. A vehicle hesitantly used by one taking undue advantage of another (6)
7. Insect crushed in playing area (7,6)
13. Civic leader gets on stumbling block (7)
15. Subtle difference pest is leaving (6)
16. To step up using part of boot (6)
17. A lot of writing on head of state's set of principles (6)
19. Bit of snow starting to fall on the water (5)

SUDOKU

Easy

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.

Hard

7		8	3					
			1		2	3	4	
	3					1		8
8				3	5		2	
	7			2	8			
			4	9		7		
5						8		1
				6			3	4
3	4		8	1	9	2	6	

9					7		4	
		4				2		8
	6				5	9		
			1			8		
					3		1	
		9	4					2
	7			2				5
								3
	8		5	1	9	6		

EQUALISER

5 6
2 ◯ 4 ◯ 2
2 2
7 ◯ 4 ◯ 1
4 1

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same.

Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

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QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Sense of taste (6)
4. Terror (6)
8. Scattered rubbish (6)
10. No matter who (6)
11. Construct (5)
12. Fine worsted yarn (6)
14. ------ counter (6)
16. English national flower (4)
17. Tray (anag.) (4)
19. Auction (4)
22. Prison room (4)
26. French Riviera resort (6)
27. Format (6)
28. Animal track (5)
29. Oedema (6)
30. Pang (6)
31. Small stoned fruit (6)
32. Assented (6)

DOWN

1. Agreed course of action (6)
2. Second of two (6)
3. Ancient Greek city (6)
5. Plaster (6)
6. Dazed (6)
7. Hypothesis (6)
9. Regulation (4)
10. Seaweed (4)
13. Female (5)
15. European country (5)
18. Sour (6)
19. Short sleep (6)
20. Smaller (6)
21. Catch sight of (4)
22. Coagulate (4)
23. Insect (6)
24. Living room (6)
25. Pay heed (6)

SOLUTIONS

QUIZ CHALLENGE: 1 The Tide is High; 2 The Ladykillers; 3 Wheel of Fortune; 4 Canterbury or Durham; 5 Tam O' Shanter; 6 Game of Thrones; 7 Kia; 8 Sextet; 9 Salome; 10 Turandot.

CROSS CODE

1 J	2 A	3 G	4 I	5 B	6 L	7 M	8 S	9 T	10 H	11 D	12 X	13 Z
14 V	15 P	16 F	17 N	18 Y	19 Q	20 E	21 O	22 U	23 R	24 K	25 C	26 W

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD:

Across – 1 Groused; 8 Imbiber; 9 Lissome; 10 Prussic; 11 Knock up; 12 Endorse; 14 Handout; 18 Officer; 20 Wrangle; 21 Chateau; 22 Nicosia; 23 Pleaded.

Down – 1 Go like the wind; 2 On show; 3 Shock; 4 Dieppe; 5 Abounds; 6 Abuser; 7 Cricket ground; 13 Congest; 15 Nuance; 16 Teacup; 17 Screed; 19 Flake.

QUICK CROSSWORD:

Across – 1 Palate; 4 Fright; 8 Litter; 10 Anyone; 11 Build; 12 Crewel; 14 Geiger; 16 Rose; 17 Arty; 19 Sale; 22 Cell; 26 Cannes; 27 Layout; 28 Spoor; 29 Dropsy; 30 Twinge; 31 Cherry; 32 Agreed. **Down** – 1 Policy; 2 Latter; 3 Thebes; 5 Render; 6 Groggy; 7 Theory; 9 Rule; 10 Alga; 13 Woman; 15 Italy; 18 Acidic; 19 Snooze; 20 Lesser; 21 Espy; 22 Clot; 23 Earwig; 24 Lounge; 25 Attend.

EASY SUDOKU

7	1	8	3	5	4	6	9	2
9	5	6	1	8	2	3	4	7
2	3	4	9	7	6	1	5	8
8	9	1	7	3	5	4	2	6
6	2	5	4	9	1	7	8	3
5	6	9	2	4	3	8	7	1
1	8	2	5	6	7	9	3	4
4	7	3	6	2	8	5	1	9
3	4	7	8	1	9	2	6	5

HARD SUDOKU

9	2	1	8	3	7	5	4	6
5	3	4	6	9	1	2	7	8
7	6	8	2	4	5	9	3	1
3	4	7	1	5	2	8	6	9
6	5	2	9	8	3	7	1	4
8	1	9	4	7	6	3	5	2
1	7	6	3	2	8	4	9	5
2	9	5	7	6	4	1	8	3
4	8	3	5	1	9	2	6	7

MAGIC SQUARE: past; ache; shoe; teem.

WORD PYRAMID: Give them the slip.

EQUALISER: Clockwise from top left – add; divide; multiply; subtract. Total: 3.

NONAGRAM: ante; anti; artery; arbier; arty; entry; errant; inert; inertia; inter; irate; rant; ranter; ratty; rate; rent; retain; retina; retinam; retry; rite; tare; tarn; tarry; tear; teary; tein; terai; tern; temary; terrain; terry; tian; ter; tine; tinea; tinier; tiny; tire; tyin; train; trainer; tray; trey; tner; trine; tyre; yeti.

FIVE ALIVE:
(1) Across – Knife; Overs; Silky. **Down** – Knows; Ideal; Essay.
(2) Across – Witch; Idiom; Guess. **Down** – Wring; Tribe; Homes.

Competition

WIN tickets to an evening of Johnny Cash at the Anvil

Closing date: Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Clive John is an accomplished singer, songwriter based in Malvern, Worcestershire. However, Clive is better known to thousands across Europe as the voice of Johnny Cash as he plays the lead role in the critically acclaimed theatre production – 'The Johnny Cash Roadshow.' this is the only show to be endorsed by the Cash family.

You have the chance to experience this first hand when the show comes to the Anvil on Wednesday March 28.

The spirit of the Man in Black is alive and 'kicking like a mule' with an outstanding celebration of the iconic legend by the Carter/Cash endorsed Johnny Cash Roadshow.

This is gold standard, fire-cracking entertainment from the first note, delivering an inspired set of cherished numbers with impeccable rhythmic pace. A dynamic performance from an unparalleled group of highly talented musicians and a guaranteed treat for country music lovers and die hard Cash fans alike.

The stage lights up with a colourful explosion of energy, against a striking backdrop of classic screen imagery of the 'real deal'. Clive John, captures the essence of Cash with exceptional style and confidence. His deep, distinctive vocals are spot on, evoking pure country magic with Walk the Line, Folsom Prison Blues and A Thing Called Love.

Charismatic duets are superb. Renditions of Don't You Think It's Come Our Time and Jackson, encapsulate the tender charm and uplifting humour shared by the late enigmatic pair. The music doesn't miss a beat as the set glides seamlessly along, evoking a timeless quality of a golden era with fresh contemporary flair.

Martin Bentley (bass) is in a league of his own and Nick Davis (guitars) and Darren Bazzoni (drums) first class. Backing vocals by Louise Masters and Amanda Stone add sparkle and glamour as the Carter sisters, complimenting the line up with equally impressive versatility.

Win tickets!

We have two pairs of tickets for this amazing night of music and to be in with a chance of winning one all you have to do is answer the following simple question:

Q: In what year was Johnny Cash born?

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to
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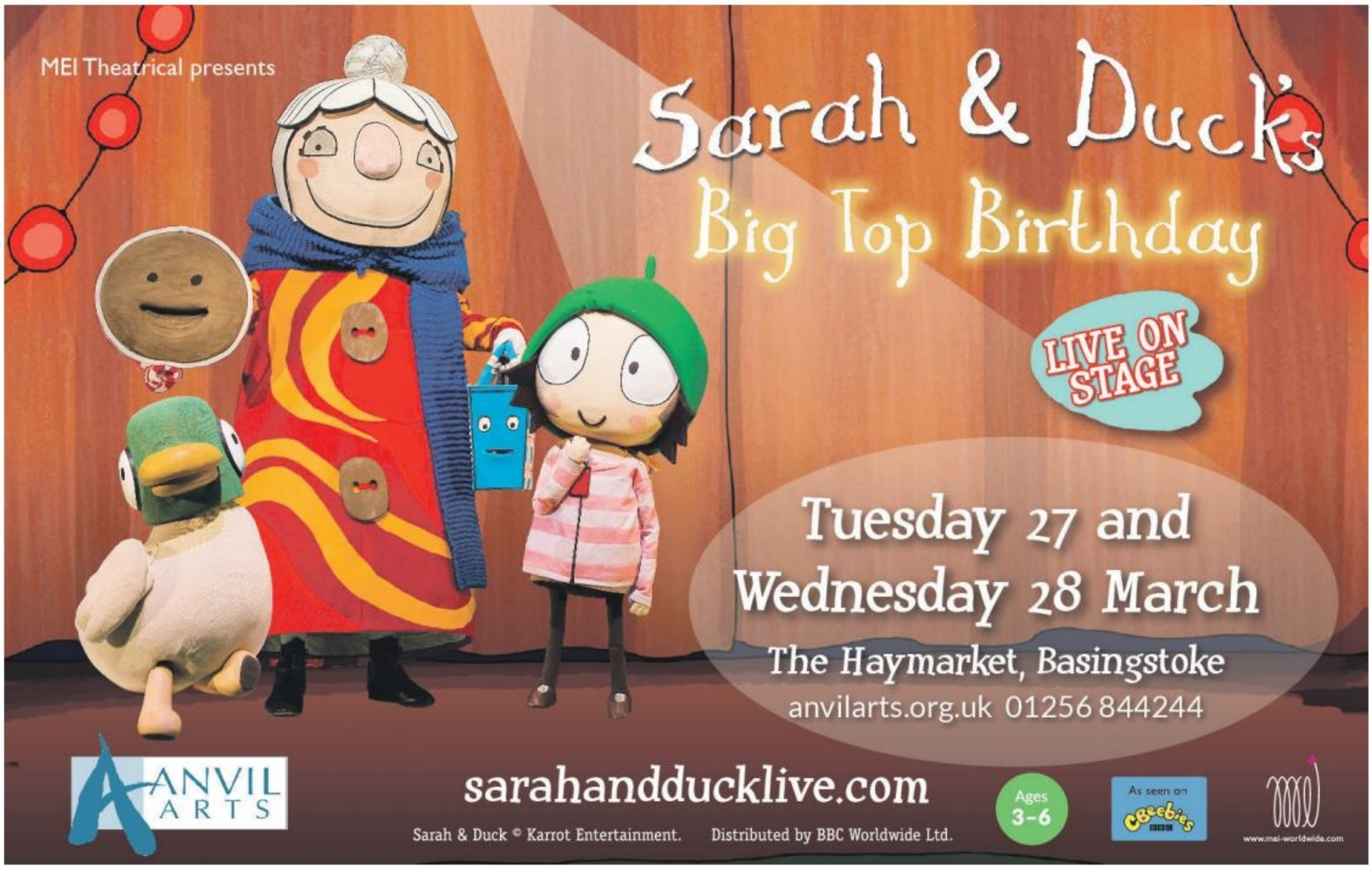

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BMW 520d M Sport Saloon

We all need one of these in our lives

By **Tony Yates**

FOR some reason, its been a while since I reviewed a BMW, and for reasons, I can't explain. Although, I think it might be because I'm pretty busy with everything else right about now.

Well thankfully, this week I have some spare time and I managed to borrow a lovely 520d M Sport for this week's review, which means you get a lovely BMW review written by me in all its glory. You have to remember - I'm not here to convince you to buy any of the cars I review, I'm merely here to point out the bits that I find interesting and the parts that I feel are worth taking a look at. The funny thing is, I get asked all the time what is the best car to buy, and I always say 'any one that takes your fancy'.

Power & efficiency

The 520d I had on test was powered by a TwinPower Turbo four-cylinder diesel engine with190hp (140kW) which produces sharp responsiveness with the added bonus of 400Nm of torque that easily manages to complete the 0-62 mph sprint in just 7.5 seconds, yet returns a combined 60+ mpg - which you have to admit is pretty amazing. I am also going to be bold here and say that it really is a brilliant engine and BMW have done a fantastic job of wringing out every last bit of horsepower .

On the road

As you would expect the 520d handling is poised thanks to the BMW engineers setting up the suspension with perfect precision, although the ride can in itself be a little soft, which to be honest, is just how I like it. Don't be fooled though by its soft ride. All that is needed is the push of a few buttons and the 520d suddenly becomes an aggressive animal in all the right places.

As long as I can remember, the 5 Series has always had a lovely soothing ride, along with a perfect and well-balanced chassis that is right behind you when you are truly giving it the beans around a tight corner. Coming into this review, I was so worried that the 5 series might have lost some of its BMW DNA.

Well, thankfully, it has not.

Equipment, safety & technology

As you would expect from BMW, the cabin materials are exceptional quality and this runs right through the veins of the 520d. There is even more good news – because it looks like BMW really have listened to what their customers want. It's not just lush inside the cabin, it's beautiful, which is a big thumbs up from me to the BMW designers. Plus, I love how all the dials and switches are set out in such a way that the driver will always feel they have fingertip control with everything they do, which is what driving a BMW is all about - 'being effortless to drive'.

Also, being an M Sport, there's plenty of standard kit - like. 18" light alloy M Double-spoke style 662 M wheels. Exterior trim in high-gloss Shadowline, LED fog lights, M aerodynamic bodystyling, M designation on front side panels, left and right.

Door sill finishers with illuminated M designation, headlining in Anthracite, the instrument panel in Sensatec, interior trim in Aluminium Rhombicle with Pearl Chrome highlight, M specific floormats, M specific pedals and M specific steering wheel and pretty much everything else you see is in M Spec also.

There is also an abundance of BMW driver assistance systems that cover a wide range of functions in the 520d, all combining an intelligent combination of different technologies to enhance safety, comfort and efficiency.

To sum up

I like the 520d M Sport – thanks mainly to how it makes you feel when you drive it. Actually, I'm not sure it could get any better. Once again BMW has proved why the 520d M Sport is a car that ticks all the boxes for the modern driver and why I think everyone needs one in their life.

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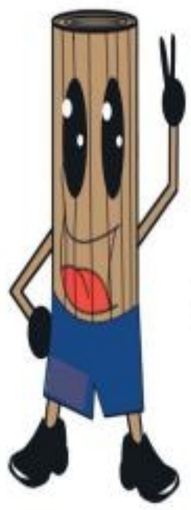

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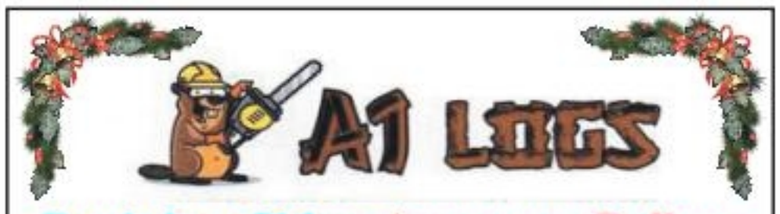

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LUCY bubbly attractive 32yr old blonde seeking similar naughty boy to share the good side of life with. Age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3692 Box No: 430347**

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LINDA, 59yrs seeking no strings fun. Pls call and leave your number & I will call or txt you back. **Tel No: 0906 500 3692 Box No: 430403**

ANNA, 53yrs, attractive blonde lady, with lovely curves. Seeking man any age for no strings discreet fun. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box: 429721**

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Bison spooked by Phantoms

By Owen Hughes

BASINGSTOKE Bison dropped to second in the NIHL South 1 after a narrow loss at title rivals Peterborough Phantoms on Sunday.

Phantoms led the chasing pack heading into the first versus second crunch encounter after beating London Raiders on Saturday.

Despite a battling performance from the Herd, the team on home ice ran out 3-2 winners to edge closer to league victory, two points ahead of Bison who remain on 52 points with a game in hand.

It was a tightly contested match-up with the league's top two teams duking it out.

Peterborough's Glenn Billing scored the only goal of the first period when he converted a powerplay at 9.52 minutes.

Nathan Salem doubled the Phantom's tally less than two minutes into the second period with an even straight goal.

Vanya Antonov gave the Herd hope with a powerplay goal on 29.25 to get Bison on the scoreboard to set up a nail biting final period for both sets of fans inside the Planet Ice Arena Bretton.

Both teams peppered their opponent's goal with a combined 27 shots, but Phantoms maintained their cool as Billing snatched his second powerplay goal at 50.22.

Captain Aaron Connolly kept the game alive at 58.05 with a late penalty, but the Herd could not find a third path to goal to force the game to overtime.

Bison coach Doug Sheppard said: "We had one big game in Peterborough and we did what we needed to do to stay alive in the league title chase.

"The guys put in a massive effort to come away with that result.

"Obviously we were missing two key players and had to have Moggy [Stuart Mogg] play out of position but the guys battled hard.

"We went to win the game but sadly came up a little short, but we're still alive in the league title race.

"Aaron Connolly came up huge for us scoring a goal we needed.

"He's been a fantastic leader so far this season and is in great form going into the final weekend of the regular season and the play-offs."

Home and away Autumn Cup Final fixtures against Swindon Wildcasts sandwich the Herd's two remaining league deciding matches.

Bison face off on home ice with Swindon on Friday, before clashes with Invicta Dynamos on Saturday and Cardiff Fire on Sunday.

The return leg of the Cup Final will take place on March 16.

Aaron Connolly once again put in a huge performances for Bison Picture: grantkingphotography

Up and down start to season for Rose ahead of Masters

AFTER a four-week break, Justin Rose is plotting how to get his hands on the green jacket which so cruelly escaped his grasp last year.

The north Hampshire golfer began a hectic couple of months with a steady-at-best tied-37th finish at the Mexico Classic last week.

He finished 17 shots off the eventual winner Phil Mickelson but is on the hunt for form and consistency as he competes in four of the next five weeks.

Rose struggled for consistency throughout, firing four birdies, two bogeys and a double bogey in round one before a further six birdies, four bogeys and a triple bogey on day two at Club de Golf Chapultepec.

The former Tylney Park and Hartley Wintney club member made the cut despite being one-over par at the halfway stage.

Things would get worse on day three however as he bogeyed five holes to finish two-over par for the day and three-over for the tournament.

Rose finished the tournament with a flourish though and five birdies in six holes helped him card an impressive four-under par for round four, ensuring he ended the tournament under par.

Mickelson was the eventual winner after beating Justin Thomas in a play-off. The pair finished on 16-under par, a shot ahead of tied-third finishers Rafael Cabrera-Bello and Englishman Tyrell Hatton.

Rose tees off at the Valspar Championship in Florida today at 7.45am local time, 12.45pm GMT.

Point to Point returns bringing racing and fun for everyone

EXCITEMENT mounts for the return of the 2018 Hampshire Hunt Point to Point in Basingstoke this Sunday as the race programme makes it out of the traps.

Punters are chomping at the bit for the popular event at Hackwood Park, which has become a firm favourite in the calendar for families, those who love the countryside and of course racing fans.

Racing proper gets under way at 1pm with six scheduled races, after the Lucy Lines Leading Rein Dash at 11.30am, followed by a parade of hounds at noon.

Charlie Corbett of the Hampshire Hunt said: "We're looking forward to a fantastic day of racing with lots of fun for everyone, both on and off the racetrack.

"This is a great community event loved by all and we're extremely grateful to all our very generous sponsors."

Last year's event attracted more than 80 entries with some thrilling races over the three mile course, which has a mixture of permanent and portable fences, a downhill back straight and an uphill finish.

A new food village will offer pizzas, homemade pies, cakes, cocktails and drinks for guests.

The event is free for under 16s, and adult tickets can be purchased online at http://bit.ly/2mt7ET0

Be Definate on the left ridden by Ellie Trousdale gets up on the line to take the ladies open from Cut The Corner

Crocodile snaps up place in last 16 at UK Open

BASINGSTOKE darts ace Paul Hogan put in another impressive run at the UK Open as he reached the last 16 for the second consecutive year.

Gerwyn Price was again Hogan's nemesis as he narrowly won a thrilling encounter 10-9 on Saturday evening at the Butlins resort in Minehead – the two having faced each other at the same stage in 2017.

It was an unusually quiet atmosphere at the darts as the recent heavy snow meant the tournament had to be played behind closed doors for safety reasons.

And 54-year-old delivery driver Hogan – known as Crocodile Dundee – almost had his weekend cut short as he only just managed to scrape past Darren Brown 6-5 on Friday.

He had a bye in the second round owing to John Goldie's withdrawal, but returned later that day to beat Paul Nicholson 10-6 to ensure he made it to the second day of play.

Hogan then had to face Dutchman Jeffrey de Zwaan – who himself had picked up a shock victory over world number one Michael van Gerwen in the previous round – and again threw well to sweep him aside 10-8.

His strong performances earned him a spot on the TV stage against Price, and he started strongly by racing into a 4-1 lead at the first break.

However Premier League player Price pulled him back to 4-4, and from then on the two players traded blows until Hogan found himself 9-7 down and on the cusp of defeat.

Hogan rallied to get back to nine apiece and was throwing for the match, but Price held his nerve and it was the Welshman who advanced to the quarter finals.

Buffalo slip up

DESPITE achieving their first victory of the year in February, Basingstoke Buffalo slipped back into old habits with a second successive defeat on Saturday.

Buffalo were considerably outshot by Guildford Phoenix, losing 3-2 on home ice.

Neil Leary scored on 14.16 minutes before Matthew Levy added a second a minute from time in the second period.

The result leaves Buffalo 11th in the NIHL South 2 on 14 points.

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Inside: Bison spooked by Phantoms | Rose tees off sesaon ahead of the Masters | Crocodile Dundee snaps up last 16 spot

Win-win situation for all parties as plan agreed for Winklebury

By Owen Hughes

BASINGSTOKE Town returned to Southern League action on Tuesday with a well-earned draw away at Slough after Saturday's away fixture in King's Lynn was called off.

'Stoke's torrid away form seemed to have finally come to an end when Jack McKnight stepped up to take a free kick with 25 minutes left of the second half.

The forward bent a world class free-kick into the top corner from 25 yards out to edge Basingstoke 1-0 ahead against the high-flying Slough.

But the lead lasted just 10 minutes before former 'Stoke player Chris Flood – the third ex-Basingstoke player on the pitch for Slough – levelled the score after some impressive footwork in the box from teammate Simon Dunn.

'Stoke sit 12th in the standings on 49 points.

The result coincided with news that Basingstoke Town Community Football Club's future home had been secured at a council cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council cabinet members unanimously approved a proposal to grant a long lease to Hampshire Football Association for the stadium at Winkelbury.

Under the arrangement, Hampshire FA would manage and develop the facility with investment from its own resources and from the Football Foundation to provide an artificial pitch.

The 3G pitch upgrade means the club would meet ground grading requirements for the Southern Premier League and allow for extensive use by the community in Basingstoke.

The ground will also become the home for Basingstoke Town Ladies FC.

Community Club Secretary Steve Williams said: "This is a win-win situation for all the parties.

"The arrangement will provide an asset for long-term and extensive community use run by Hampshire Football Association with no financial cost to council taxpayers."

But Mr Williams warned that "considerable financial and other challenges" remained.

Cabinet member for communities and community safety, Cllr Simon Bound, said the partnership would involve no outlay for the council and secure savings in running costs, while providing some 60 hours weekly use by the community.

Hampshire FA's Chief Executive Officer Neil Cassar said it is "an exciting opportunity for football in the borough".

'Stoke welcome St Neots to their current home at the Camrose on Saturday.

A firm favourite

The thrills and spills of Point to Point racing return to Hackwood Park near Basingstoke on Sunday when the popular Hampshire Hunt event takes to the course. For full details, see inside

Pip Hooley's Tick Tock Ten on the nearside at Hackwood Park

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